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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/08/2017  
TAGS: PTER PGOV PHUM DA JO  
SUBJECT: WOULD-BE POTUS ASSASSINS

REF: A. AMMAN 1038

¶B. TD-314/91008-06  
¶C. AMMAN 720

Classified By: CDA Daniel Rubinstein for reasons 1.4 b and d

¶1. (SBU) Jordanian dailies carried more reports March 8 on the opening of state security court (SSC) proceedings against three men accused of a number of security offenses, including plotting to assassinate President Bush during his visit to Jordan in late November 2006. The three are Nidal Momani, 29, Sattam Zawahra, 28, and Tharwat Daraz, 24, all residents of Zarqa. Prosecutors also accused them of plotting to attack U.S. and Danish "embassies" in Amman, though Denmark is represented here by a part-time honorary consul who works out of his law office.

¶2. (C) Jordanian security services arrested the men in October after they allegedly threw soft-drink bottles filled with gasoline at a brewery in Zarqa in a failed arson attempt. After their capture, the allegedly admitted to police that they had discussed among themselves obtaining automatic weapons and explosives, and using them against President Bush, who visited Amman November 29-30.

¶3. (S/NF) A GOJ entity briefed Embassy on the detentions in mid-December (ref b).

¶4. (SBU) In line with past practice, the GOJ did not publicly acknowledge the plot until the case reached the State Security Court, where it becomes a matter of public record. The defendants retained attorney Abdul Jabbar Abu Qulah who pleaded their innocence, and charged that authorities extracted the confessions under duress.

¶5. (C) Comment. Most trials here that include alleged confessions to terrorism charges include claims that authorities mistreated detainees. The GoJ states that Islamist extremist groups train their members to make false claims of mistreatment in the event they are captured (ref C). End Comment.  
RUBINSTEIN